

MARY S: I think that was an important component of that five-day training that may be lost if it goes to two hours. It is hard to get that whole sense of what domestic violence is in such a short period of time, coupled with the lack of interaction. It is important to have a live trainer and your peer group to talk about these things and hash them out. My experience as a trainer is that law enforcement officers aren't ignorant of the law, have good intentions and want to do the right thing. But, just like any person walking down the street on any given day, if you haven't had training or exposure to domestic violence, it is hard to comprehend how complicated it is. It is really easy to become jaded and fall back into that perennial question of, 'Why doesn't she just leave?'

That's why training through DOCJT or KDVA — whoever can give it — is really important for law enforcement, prosecutors, judges, legal services attorneys, social workers, and people in the medical community. A lot of people come in contact with victims and their response can really set the tone for how that victim will later try, or not try, to make any attempt to reach out. If someone is being battered and the police are called, show up and say, 'I'm

just going to take both of you to jail,' then obviously the person who is the victim in that circumstance will never call the police again. Someone may go to court and get a protective order and then, because of the dynamics that are involved in this complicated process of trying to separate from an abuser, she may end up with the abuser, either back in the same residence or simply in his presence. If the police see her, arrest her and charge her with complicity to commit a violation of a protective order, again, that's really going to chill any effort she might make in the future to try and get to a safe place.

As Sharon said, it's a dynamic that is hard to understand, but needs to be understood by all the professionals who come into contact with families that are struggling.

I think we lose sight of the fact that we all really have the same goal. KDVA's goal is to make Kentucky a safe place for families, and I think that is law enforcement's goal, too. Working together in trying to achieve that and not feel like we're knocking heads uselessly, is imperative.

SHARON: I think we're making improvements. I think law enforcement, overall,

is more willing to understand the situation and intervene appropriately. Some days it's hard to believe, but we've come a long way from police showing up, walking someone around the block, telling them to cool down and then leaving. This is what happened. Nobody did anything. Not just police, but that is how, as a community, we responded. It was a family matter and we weren't going to get involved. That's really changed. And, if you think about it, it has really changed in a very short amount of time. The whole movement is less than 50 years old.

MARY S: In addition, one of our purposes of existence is to help — to offer technical assistance. I would want law enforcement agencies to look upon us as another resource in their toolbox. We are here to help any professional who is working with domestic violence victims.

Is there recent legislation that has changed the mission, objectives or path of KDVA? How?

SHARON: I think our biggest piece of legislation is the one we can't get through. It's the one we want to talk most about, always and forever. We're trying to amend the protective order statute to include dating partners. Now you have to live together, have a child together or formally have lived together to get a protective order. So that means young women on campuses who live in dorms are not protected, yet they have all the problems because their perpetrators know where they live and how to get to them. We have older women who may have dated someone and never lived with them and can't get protection. Forty-six out of 50 states and the District of Columbia have passed this law. We can't get it through the Senate. The House has passed it the past three years, and we can't get it through the Senate. There are some Senate leadership people who keep saying you can use criminal law to prosecute perpetrators, but that ignores the whole purpose of a protective order, which is to provide safety and protection before she gets beaten up a second time, rather than letting her prosecute him after he beats her up a second time. 🌧️

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The Green Dot Strategy

A single choice in one moment in time to use your voice, actions or choices to make one small corner of the world safer.

Green Dot is built on the premise that in order to measurably reduce the perpetration of power-based personal violence, a cultural shift is necessary. In order to create a cultural shift, a critical mass of people will need to engage in a new behavior or set of behaviors that will make violence less sustainable within any given community. The "new behavior" is a Green Dot.

A shared vision that creates momentum through the power of a common language and purpose.

In isolation, even the most determined single Green Dot can dissolve into silent resignation when faced with a task as daunting as changing our culture. The power of Green Dot is the momentum that can be created and sustained when individuals see themselves in connection with others as a part of something ultimately bigger than the sum of its parts.

A social movement that harnesses the power of peer influence and individual bystander choices to create lasting culture change resulting in the ultimate reduction of power-based personal violence.

Power-based personal violence happens to such a staggering degree that the only workable solution must involve a broad-based, good ole' fashioned social movement. Each significant stride in human rights has been fueled by and built upon a social movement, consisting of enough individuals simply raising their voices saying, "This is no longer acceptable. Today is the day we reclaim our fundamental right to something better." One Green Dot at a time, this is our moment in history to reclaim our right to live free of violence and fear of violence. ■